

## CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A method of screening cookie files in a client machine, the method comprising:
  - (a) receiving, at a server, a request from a subscriber to send a list of cookie file sources to the client machine;
  - (b) downloading the list from the server to the client machine; and
  - (c) using the downloaded list to detect cookie files received at the client machine from sources on the downloaded list.
2. The method of claim 1, further comprising:
  - (d) creating a first exception list including the identity of sources that are permitted to store cookie files in the client machine;
  - (e) creating a second exception list including the identity of sources that are not permitted to store cookie files in the client machine; and
  - (f) modifying the downloaded list in accordance with the first and second exception lists.
3. The method of claim 1, further comprising:
  - (d) receiving updates of the downloaded list from the server on a periodic basis.
4. The method of claim 1, further comprising:
  - (d) displaying a message at the client machine indicating that a cookie file received from a source on the downloaded list has been detected.
5. The method of claim 1, further comprising:
  - (d) removing detected cookie files stored in the client machine.
6. The method of claim 1, further comprising:
  - (d) preventing detected cookie files from being stored in the client machine.
7. A method of creating a composite list of cookie file sources in a client machine, the method comprising:
  - (a) creating a first exception list including the identity of sources that are permitted to store cookie files in the client machine;

(b) creating a second exception list including the identity of sources that are not permitted to store cookie files in the client machine;

(c) receiving at the client machine, from a service provider, a master list of cookie file sources; and

(d) modifying the master list in accordance with the first and second exception lists, wherein the composite list is the modified master list.

8. The method of claim 7, wherein the composite list is stored in the client machine independent of the first exception list, the second exception list and the received master list.

9. The method of claim 7, further comprising:

(e) receiving updates of the master list from the service provider on a periodic basis.

10. The method of claim 7, further comprising:

(e) removing stored cookie files received at the client machine from sources on the composite list.

11. The method of claim 7, further comprising:

(e) preventing cookie files received at the client machine from sources on the composite list from being stored in the client machine.

12. A method of creating a composite list of cookie file sources in a client machine, the method comprising:

(a) receiving at the client machine, from a service provider, a master list of cookie file sources;

(b) deleting cookie file sources from the master list that correspond to one or more trusted cookie file sources listed in the client machine; and

(c) adding cookie file sources to the master list that correspond to one or more untrusted cookie file sources listed in the client machine, wherein the composite list is the master list as modified by any additions and deletions of trusted and untrusted cookie file sources.

13. The method of claim 12, wherein the master list and the composite list are stored independently in the client machine.

14. The method of claim 12, further comprising:

(d) removing cookie files stored in the client machine and received from sources on the composite list.

15. The method of claim 12, further comprising:

(d) preventing cookie files, received at the client machine from sources on the composite list, from being stored in the client machine.

16. An article of manufacture for screening cookie files in a client machine, the article of manufacture comprising a computer-readable medium holding computer-executable instructions for performing a method comprising:

(a) receiving, at a server, a request from a subscriber to send a list of cookie file sources to the client machine;

(b) downloading the list from the server to the client machine; and

(c) using the downloaded list to detect cookie files received at the client machine from sources on the downloaded list.

17. The article of manufacture of claim 16, wherein the computer-executable instructions perform a method further comprising:

(d) creating a first exception list including the identity of sources that are permitted to store cookie files in the client machine;

(e) creating a second exception list including the identity of sources that are not permitted to store cookie files in the client machine; and

(f) modifying the downloaded list in accordance with the first and second exception lists.

18. The article of manufacture of claim 16, wherein the computer-executable instructions perform a method further comprising:

(d) receiving updates of the downloaded list from the server on a periodic basis.

19. The article of manufacture of claim 16, wherein the computer-executable instructions perform a method further comprising:

(d) displaying a message at the client machine indicating that a cookie file received from a source on the downloaded list has been detected.

20. The article of manufacture of claim 16, wherein the computer-executable instructions perform a method further comprising:

- (d) removing detected cookie files stored in the client machine.

21. The article of manufacture of claim 16, wherein the computer-executable instructions perform a method further comprising:

- (d) preventing detected cookie files from being stored in the client machine.

22. An article of manufacture for creating a composite list of cookie file sources in a client machine, the article of manufacture comprising a computer-readable medium holding computer-executable instructions for performing a method comprising:

- (a) creating a first exception list including the identity of sources that are permitted to store cookie files in the client machine;
- (b) creating a second exception list including the identity of sources that are not permitted to store cookie files in the client machine;
- (c) receiving at the client machine, from a service provider, a master list of cookie file sources; and
- (d) modifying the master list in accordance with the first and second exception lists, wherein the composite list is the modified master list.

23. The article of manufacture of claim 22, wherein the composite list is stored in client machine independent of the first exception list, the second exception list and the received master list.

24. The article of manufacture of claim 22, wherein the computer-executable instructions perform a method further comprising:

- (e) receiving updates of the master list from the service provider on a periodic basis.

25. The article of manufacture of claim 22, wherein the computer-executable instructions perform a method further comprising:

- (e) removing stored cookie files received at the client machine from sources on the composite list.

26. The article of manufacture of claim 22, wherein the computer-executable instructions perform a method further comprising:

(e) preventing cookie files received at the client machine from sources on the composite list from being stored in the client machine.

27. An article of manufacture for creating a composite list of cookie file sources in a client machine, the article of manufacture comprising a computer-readable medium holding computer-executable instructions for performing a method comprising:

(a) receiving at the client machine, from a service provider, a master list of cookie file sources;

(b) deleting cookie file sources from the master list that correspond to one or more trusted cookie file sources listed in the client machine; and

(c) adding cookie file sources to the master list that correspond to one or more untrusted cookie file sources listed in the client machine, wherein the composite list is the master list as modified by any additions and deletions of trusted and untrusted cookie file sources.

28. The article of manufacture of claim 27, wherein the master list and the composite list are stored independently in the client machine.

29. The article of manufacture of claim 27, wherein the computer-executable instructions perform a method further comprising:

(d) removing cookie files stored in the client machine and received from sources on the composite list.

30. The article of manufacture of claim 27, wherein the computer-executable instructions perform a method further comprising:

(d) preventing cookie files, received at the client machine from sources on the composite list, from being stored in the client machine.